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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Forced Labor Camp at 'Wesola II' Coal Mine:
Physical Set-up/Camp Rules, Procedures, Food,
Wages & Work Schedule/Type of Inmates/Special
System of Bonuses/Exploitation of Coal Mine

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Physical Set-up

2. "The forced labor camp which exists at the coal mine 'Wesola II' is situated within the boundaries of the mine. It consists of six barracks to accommodate the inmates, one barrack which serves as a recreation and meeting place, one administration building and the so called 'Block No. 7' where the kitchen, messroom, storerooms and the camp canteen are located. The area of the camp is surrounded by a double barbed wire fence and five watch towers. During the night the whole area of the camp is illuminated.
3. "The inmates (about 800 to 850) are accommodated in the above-mentioned six sleeping barracks. The sanitary conditions are very bad. There are only a few washing places in the camp and very inadequate bath facilities.

Camp Rules, Procedure, Food, Wages & Work Schedule

4. "Each of the inmates is issued two prison garments, one blanket (in winter two blankets), one bowl and one spoon. It is forbidden to have any private belongings or articles for every-day use. In parcels, which can be sent to inmates, only the clothing and underwear of the prison type can be included. No foodstuffs or cigarettes are allowed. If money is sent to an inmate, it is kept on the 'iron account' and paid only when the prisoner is being released.

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5. "Food was very inadequate. It mainly consisted of gruel and soups made of potatoes and cabbage. Meat was served only a few times a year, on the occasions of State or Party celebrations. The daily ration of bread was 400 grams.
6. "The monthly wages of inmates amounted on the average to 400 or 450 zloty. Out of this amount 50% was deducted for the 'upkeep' in the camp, 25% was paid to the 'iron account' of the inmate and the remaining 25% was transferred to his 'canteen account'. Such articles as bread, cigarettes and candy were available in the canteen for everybody, but more valuable items, such as bacon, butter, lard and sugar, were reserved only for 'activists'. The prices in the camp canteen were very high, such as on the 'free' market.
7. "From the 'canteen' accounts of inmates various deductions were made by the camp management for 'damage' of garments, underwear and blankets allegedly made by inmates. Although they receive only used articles, which wear out quickly and of which some are already in bad shape, every two or three months a general check-up is carried out in the camp, and for all 'damages' found by the commission the inmates have to pay the full price for a new article. Thus, for a torn blanket the management deducts as much as 110 zloty. It was a usual procedure that the torn blanket, for which the inmate was ordered to pay the full value, was then crudely repaired by resewing and issued to another inmate, who in turn was again made to pay its total value when after one or two months the stitches came apart.
8. "The work lasted seven days a week, with only rare exceptions. No additional wages were paid for work on Sunday.

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Types of Inmates

10. "Among the 330 inmates who had been detained at a certain time in the camp, about 10% were Germans and a few inhabitants of Silesia and Masuria who refused to accept Polish citizenship and declared themselves to be Germans. Among the remaining inmates a large number were those who tried to cross the frontier illegally and after having been caught were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. There was also a group of sailors who had been caught while attempting to jump their ships, and a number of soldiers sentenced for various offenses against discipline. The number of common criminals among the inmates was rather small. As a rule, they were used by the camp management as informers and spies.

11. "In 1951 and 1952, among the inmates were the following:

- a. Antoni Bykowski,
- b. Feliks Niegolewski
- c. Tadeusz Seweryn
- d. Marian Makowka
- e. Adam Augustyniak
- f. Rudolf Smolka
- g. Werner Furgol
- h. Bronislaw Marek
- i. Horst Ruske
- j. Teodor Gruszka
- k. Jan Stanczyk,

- l. Kazimierz Szarpala

- m. Zenon Sosnowski

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12.

13. "Many of the above-enumerated prisoners have already been released from prison as the result of the amnesty announced at the end of 1952. In the 'Wesola II' camp, a special celebration was held on 4 December 1952 when the first 18 prisoners were freed. A special orchestra was brought to the camp to play on the occasion when these first 18 inmates were released. During December 1952 approximately 200 inmates were released. However, soon afterwards two transports with about 100 new prisoners arrived in the camp. They were made up mostly of prisoners with long sentences (five years and up).

Special System of Bonuses

14. "Just before the announcement of the amnesty a special system of bonuses was introduced in the camp. For overfulfilment of the daily work norm by 110% or more, every such a working day was counted as two. However, the decision always remained in the hands of the prosecutor, and in practice, only those inmates who in addition to their labor achievements worked also as informers could expect the shortening of their detention.
15. "Many prisoners later detained in the forced labor camp of the 'Wesola II' coal mine had also been used in the actual construction of this newly established mine, one of seven new mines which they are planning to open up under the six-year plan. During the construction period, apart from about 800 prisoners, over 300 free workers and a detachment from the Labor Battalions, about 60 men strong, worked there.

Exploitation of Coal Mine

16. "The new pit, 'Wesola II', is situated in a forest, west from Myslowice. At present it has a depth of 340 meters, but further work for the purpose of deepening the pit up to 500 meters is being carried out.
17. "The exploitation of the mine started in October 1952 and is now conducted in five sections. The pit is considered as a 'cold' one and during the construction work water was often found in the galleries. The seams are low, on the average 1.20 m, but the quality of coal is high and according to rumors circulating among the inmates, the mined coal is sent for further processing to chemical plants.
18. "As the seams are so low, the work in the mine is very difficult and tiresome. Miners have to work as a rule in a bent and often kneeling position.
19. "The quick pace at which the mine was built resulted in very careless execution of preparatory works, which now causes many accidents during the actual exploitation of the mine. Galleries collapse and props and pillars break. Particularly inadequate are pumping installations. In the second and third sections, the water often reaches 20 cm in the galleries.
20. "The transport installations are also of a very poor quality and performance. All over the mine Soviet-made 'Pantser' conveyors were installed. They are light and easy to transport from one place to another, but their chains are too weak and break very often. A Polish-made conveyor patterned after the Soviet model and called 'Pancer' - Pzp - I', although heavier is far better and doesn't break or get damaged as often as its Soviet model.

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21. "Although Communist propaganda boasted that the 'Wesola II' pit had been supplied with the most modern equipment, the plain truth is that the majority of drills working in the mine are of the old German make. There are no spare parts to these drills. They were to be shipped from East Germany before the opening of the pit, but they never arrived. This causes many stoppages.
22. "Another cause of stoppages is a very irregular supply of pit props. Often they are of very poor quality, with knots or bends. This in turn causes many accidents in galleries. One of the more serious accidents occurred last December/1952/ in Section six. One civilian miner and one inmate of the camp were killed while four other inmates were badly injured and had to be sent to the hospital. According to rumors, all these four later died in the hospital.
23. "In the opinion of non-imprisoned miners who had been sent to the 'Wesola II' pit, the conditions of work in this new mine are particularly hard. This is perhaps the reason that the majority of miners employed in this mine is composed of prisoners.
24. "The imprisoned miners, working under such unfavorable conditions, without even Sunday rests (in 1952 they had only about four free Sundays), were so exhausted that they had no stamina or will to use various sport installations in the camps or to go to the recreation room. They mainly played checkers or read papers. Many of them subscribed to various dailies. In the camp there were some copies of the paper, Trybuna Ludu, local Party newspapers and several weeklies and monthlies."

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